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Question1: 1. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to compete effectively in global markets?

First of all, it's very difficult to look at the problems Hawaiian farmers face and compare that to our mainland counterparts. The regulations preventing shipment of Hawaiian grown produce to the mainland and our higher cost of labor prevent us from competing effectively in global markets. The costly but required pest risk assessments that have been completed address only a limited number of crops. Our cost of production prevents us from competing effectively with foreign imports. For example, lychee imports from Thailand and Taiwan are wholesaled in Honolulu for \$1.00 per pound. Our cost of production is roughly \$1.70. Many growers in Hawaii have lost local markets to the cheaper imports yet they often attempt to compete on price instead of quality, which infers that more education is needed. In turn, the university needs more funding and staff to carry this out.

Inspection fees on imports should be required. These fees should be used to fund additional USDA / customs inspectors for agricultural products, especially those that compete with local products and have the possibility of accidental importation of pests affecting locally grown crops. The risk of pests being imported is real. All one has to do is read the reports from the current inspections/interceptions being carried out to find out about the pests that have been stopped at Hawaiian ports. Inspection fees on imports such as all mainland and foreign grown green coffee, lychee, starfruit, ginger, avocados etc., would yield more than enough funds to provide employment for the inspectors and perhaps contribute to the buy local campaigns.

Question2: 2. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?

For farmers, seeing is believing. Agricultural models need to be established that show the positives, both in lifestyle and profitability. Model farms, that encompass all possible variables and integrated components would be a great asset, to both existing farms and to the next generation of farmers. Helping the small family farm to become profitable and sustainable should be the goal of these models. Building the model farm should be the role of the university and producer cooperatives. These profitable prototype farms could serve as role models for existing farms and new farmers.

In Hawaii, the number of new farmers is extremely high and the need for education great. Many of the new farmers find that after 5 years, they

have not been profitable and leave for other pursuits. A public, model farm, would serve to educate this segment and help rural communities in Hawaii to stabilize.

Question3: 3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?

As a farmer I have benefited greatly from assistance provided through the University and cooperative extension service. This assistance has taken many forms that revolve around education I received after asking questions. Programs like WSARE farmer-rancher competitive grants have helped many local farmers to become more productive and sustainable. Policy design should foster and encompass partnerships between university, government, chef's organizations and private enterprise that benefit rural areas as a whole. These partnerships should be equitable for all and be a mix of research, marketing and product development. Federally funded programs should look at revitalization of existing programs as well as new programs. For example many university experiment stations are vastly underutilized and would be of benefit to the communities where they are, if additional funds could be earmarked for the revitalization. This would require funding for additional staff as well as community based programs within the station environment. (Community kitchens, victory gardens with new varieties, educational displays on organic and sustainable practices etc.)

A back to the roots program is needed in order for the next generation to have a basis on which they can build. All farming areas should have a certain level of self-sufficiency with agricultural commodities. Current estimates from the HASS (Hi. Ag Statistics Service), estimate the level in Hawaii as being only 20%. Fostering buy fresh buy local campaigns and strengthening farm chef relations is essential to the small family farm and rural areas, especially those areas where tourism is a factor.

Policy needs to include revitalization and strengthening of small rural cooperatives that have a hard time competing with large businesses. In many cases the infrastructure of the cooperatives is antiquated making competition impossible. Those cooperatives that market internationally are often at a disadvantage when competing not only with big business but also with the well-funded national cooperatives of other countries.

Question4: 4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?

There are many excellent programs in place if one takes the time to understand and read all that's available. This is something not often done by local farmers. Funding public displays and museum type interpretive signage at locations like university research stations, would be an effective way to get the messages across. Achieving these conservation and environmental goals starts with education. Seeing them in action and utilized in public environments would do much more than simply having material available for reading.

This would also help to revitalize the stations and extension programs. Additional funding for extension agents and specialists dedicated to these goals would also be helpful.

Question5: 5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas? Make the language easier for the average farmer to understand. Provide grant writing assistance for cooperative groups either as a mandate for extension services to follow or as a staff position within rural development agencies. USDA funded

programs should be for cooperative groups that benefit a percentage of the community and not for big well established companies who are often better able to take advantage of current programs because of their level of knowledge and staffing dedicated to finding funding.

Question6: 6. How should these agricultural product, marketing, and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

Personally I would favor development of component based farming systems for rural areas that would be all inclusive. Currently, in Hawaii, most farmers are mono-cropped or have perhaps at the most 2 or 3 crops. In parts of Asia where cost of labor is comparable to Hawaii, successful farmers usually have 6 or 7 crops that are harvestable over a greater period of time, which decreases the need for external labor. Programs need to encourage a much greater crop diversification. An integrated component based farming system would include not only a greater crop diversification system but also include agtourism, value added product development, on-farm sales, wholesale marketing, farmer-chef connections and so on. These systems also need to be integrated with research and marketing from university and public funded, private enterprise programs. In short, we all need to work together for outlined common goals.

Priorities for Hawaiian agriculture in the Kona

I feel these are essential for helping farms in Kona to become more sustainable. They can only be achieved with public funding or a combination of public and private funding.

Processing facility for locally grown fruit with value added product development area & sales outlet.

Fruit Park and model farm with museum, restaurant and community education center.

See <http://www.hawaiiifruit.net/hfp.htm> on Japanese fruit parks as a role model for Hawaii.

Strengthen the Farmers Cooperative

Inspection of incoming produce and plants that compete with those locally grown and carry the risk of imported pests.